before the end of its 48th Session. The Question is also in the provisional agenda of the 49th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Preservation of Ecology of Himalayas

154. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Himalayas are a source and foundation of economy and ecology of the whole country;

(b) whether it is a also a fact that preservation of the Himalayas is the duty of all hill States;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Himachal Pradesh is financially a weak State;

(d) if so, whether Government propose to give special grant to Himachal Pradesh to help in the preservation of ecology of Himalayas; and

(e) if so, the amount of grant proposed to be given?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Manas Tiger Project, Assam

155. SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether government are aware that the UNESCO is contemplating to declare "Manas Tiger Project" in Assam as "World heritage site in danger"; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The World Heritage Convention was concerned that the Reserve was under constant threat and attacks from the Bodo tribesmen, which apart from resulting in widespread poaching of wildlife, illegal removal of vegetation had also resulted in continuing attacks on Government staff and properties.

Population of tigers and leopards

156. SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise population of tigers and leopards in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that the population of the tigers in Manas Tiger Reserve has dwindled during the last decade;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps are being taken to protect and maintain the tiger population in the Tiger Reserves of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The information is given in statement. (*See* below)

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Increase in poaching to meet the illegal demand in trade of tiger bones and other parts of its body has been the major cause of the decline in the population of tigers.

(d) The steps taken by the Government are as under:-

(i) A Tiger Crisis Cell has been set up in the Ministry;